



January 2, 2008

The Honorable Kathleen McDonald O'Malley  
Carl B. Stokes United States Courthouse  
801 West Superior Avenue  
Cleveland, OH 44113-1840

Dear Judge O'Malley:

My name is Walter Pechenuk, and I am a lecturer in the Department of Computer Science at Kent State University. I am a former instructor of Mr. EVAN STERN, who has asked me to provide you with this character reference.

I have known Evan for over three years. Evan was a student in my Social and Ethical Issues in Computing class in the fall semester of 2004, and during the same term he was also one of the founders of and an officer in the Kent State Student Chapter of the International Game Developers Association. When I had Evan in my class he always performed well and wrote outstanding and well-argued essays that discussed his commitment to excellence in his chosen field of endeavor. Evan never hesitated to participate in class activities and discussions, and to the best of my knowledge, he never missed class. When I recall Evan's work I also remember that when he commits himself to a project or a program, he carries it to completion. This is what he did with the International Game Developers Association. His organizational skills and devotion to the chapter helped many students become involved in visual-and-graphic design projects and careers – this is the path that Evan's own career has also taken. When I think of Evan, this is what comes to my mind first and foremost – his dedication to helping his fellow students and workers, and I am sure that when Evan's life is evaluated with regard to all the acts that he has taken, events such as this will always outweigh any thoughtless activities that he committed as a young adult. What Evan did by downloading legally and morally unacceptable images of reprehensible acts committed on children and adolescents was wrong, and he acknowledges this. From my understanding, despite this heinous activity, he did not participate in the sale of any of these images and did not play a part in the distribution of them outside communication channels connected to the server that hosted these images.

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I believe that Evan has learned his lesson and has personally taken steps to resolve any problems that may have led to the activity in question by seeking professional help. In fact, as early as November 2005 Evan asked me freely to discuss this matter with my students so they understand what may happen and what adverse consequences may arise from actions such as his; he has also given me permission to bring up this matter at an international conference on cyberspace issues that I plan to attend in March.

I hope that this matter can be resolved in Evan's favor in order for him to go on with his life and career, as well as to serve to others as an example of what can take place when carrying out wrongful acts – particularly the unbearable mental stress and trauma that follow after being discovered of illegal behavior.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Walter Pechenuk". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Walter Pechenuk

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